

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 INR-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 EUR-08 A-01 OPR-01 H-01 PRS-01 SSO-00

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P R 180945Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9839

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4882

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, UK, CB

SUBJ: TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF UNITED KINGDOM EMBASSY

REF: STATE 059874 (NOTAL)

1. DCM CALLED ON BRITISH CHARGE' MIDDLETON MORNING MARCH 18 TO OFFER ANY ASSISTANCE NEEDED BY UK EMBASSY, WHICH U.S. MISSION COULD PROVIDE, IN THE EVACUATION OF THEIR PERSONNEL AND "SENSITIVE" EQUIPMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL.

2. MIDDLETON READ TO DCM TELEGRAM HE HAD JUST RECEIVED FROM FOREIGN OFFICE INSTRUCTING HIM TO CLOSE EMBASSY "TEMPORARILY". MIDDLETON MENTIONED THAT TWO DAYS AGO HE HAD SENT A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IN PHNOM PENH TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, IN WHICH HE HAD EXPLAINED THAT THE AUSTRALIANS HAD DEPARTED BECAUSE THE GOA FEARED FOR THE PERSONAL SAFETY OF THEIR MISSION PERSONNEL, WHILE THE FRENCH HAD DEPARTED, HE PRESUMED, BECAUSE THEY HAD TAKEN SERIOUSLY SINANOUK'S WARNING THAT IF THEY DID NOT GET OUT NOW THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RETURN UNDER A GRUNK REGIME. MIDDLETON SAID  
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THAT IN HIS TELEGRAM HE HAD STATED HE HAD RECEIVED

ASSURANCES WHICH WERE "FIRM" FROM THE U.S. MISSION THAT WE WOULD INCLUDE HIS PEOPLE IN OUR OWN EVACUATION SHOULD SUCH AN EVENTUALITY OCCUR. THE U.K. CHARGE' MADE NO RECOMMENDATION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER ON THE QUESTION OF CLOSING DOWN HIS EMBASSY, BUT HE DID ASK THAT ANOTHER RAF PLANE BE SENT IN THIS WEEKEND TO TAKE OUT ADDITIONAL "SENSITIVE" EQUIPMENT (BY WHICH HE MEANT EXPENSIVE CRYPTOGRAPHIC MACHINES).

3. THE TELEGRAM INSTRUCTING MIDDLETON TO CLOSE THE MISSION CAME FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE PERSONALLY, MIDDLETON SAID. THE SECRETARY OF STATE EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD CONSULTED THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, WHICH HAD CONFIRMED TO HIM THAT THE CLOSURE OF THE U.K. MISSION IN PHNOM PENH WOULD HAVE NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FOR CAMBODIA. THE SECRETARY OF STATE THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT THE PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION WAS THE SAFETY OF U.K. MISSION PERSONNEL IN PHNOM PENH AND ON THAT BASIS HE HAD DECIDED TO WITHDRAW THEM ALL. MIDDLETON WAS INSTRUCTED TO GO TO SAIGON HIMSELF AND CONTINUE TO KEEP AN EYE ON CAMBODIA FROM THERE, WHILE THE REST OF HIS PERSONNEL WERE TO RETURN DIRECTLY TO LONDON. THE SECRETARY OF STATE REJECTED THE REQUEST FOR A SECOND RAF FLIGHT INTO PHNOM PENH, EXPLAINING THAT THE FIRST FLIGHT HAD CREATED A GREAT DEAL OF PUBLICITY, WHICH HMG WISHED TO AVOID REPEATING. MIDDLETON WAS INSTRUCTED TO LEAVE PHNOM PENH ON THE USAID FLIGHT TO BANGKOK IF THE U.S. MISSION COULD ARRANGE THAT. THE EXACT TIMING OF DEPARTURE WAS LEFT UP TO HIM.

4. MIDDLETON SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY REGRETTED THIS DECISION AND HE HOPED IT WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON OUR EFFORTS HERE NOR ON THE GKR. DCM RESPONDED THAT COMING IN THE WAKE OF THE DEPARTURE OF SO MANY OTHER MISSIONS SUCH AS THE AUSTRALIANS AND FRENCH, HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON GKR MORALE, SINCE THE FRENCH DEPARTURE HAD APPARENTLY HAD VERY LITTLE EFFECT. MIDDLETON REMARKED THAT A COUPLE OF EVENINGS AGO THE HOUR-LONG BRITISH TELEVISION PROGRAM "PANORAMA" HAD BEEN DEVOTED TO CAMBODIA AND HAD CONTAINED THE GORIEST SCENES IMAGINABLE OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN NEAK LUONG. MIDDLETON COMMENTED THAT IN

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THE FACE OF BRITISH PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY OPINION INFLUENCED BY SUCH MEDIA REPORTING, THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO REMOVE BRITISH SUBJECTS INCLUDING DIPLOMATS FROM THE BESEIGED CAPITAL OF CAMBODIA.

5. MIDDLETON ACCEPTED OUR OFFER OF A USAID CARIBOU FLIGHT TO SAIGON THIS COMING FRIDAY, MARCH 21, WHICH CAN CARRY ALL SIX REMAINING MEMBERS OF HIS MISSION, PLUS

ALL OF THE "SENSITIVE" EQUIPMENT HE HAS REMAINING, AS WELL AS THEIR PERSONAL BAGGAGE. HE WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE OF OUR HELP, AND SAID HE WISHED TO CALL ON AMBASSADOR DEAN PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE TO THANK HIM PERSONALLY AND TO EXPRESS REGRETS THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO CLOSE HIS MISSION TEMPORARILY. MIDDLETON ADDED THAT HE WOULD TRY TO KEEP PUBLICITY ABOUT THE CLOSURE TO A MINIMUM, AND THAT WHEN THE NEWS GOT OUT HE WOULD STRESS THE TEMPORARY CHARACTER OF THE CLOSURE AND THE FACT THAT HE WOULD BE JOINING HIS AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON, WHO WAS TO HAVE BEEN ACCREDITED TO CAMBODIA. DCM EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE STORY WOULD REMAIN FOR LONG OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESS, BUT NOTED THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY NOT CAUSE MUCH OF A STIR SINCE IT CAME AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF SO MANY OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONS. DEAN

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